



Why Water and WASH Education?

BECAUSE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE CHANGES EVERYTHING!

Water plays an integral role in the prosperity of developing, rural communities. Beyond having a safe water source for drinking purposes, water is also at the centre of good WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) education for the overall health and well-being of communities. It also encourages participation in education, and promotes gender equality. This training is crucial, as the benefits of clean water become null if, for example, water is transported in unclean jugs or contaminated by animal and human faecal matter. WASH training also includes educating the benefiting communities on how to properly manage and maintain their new source, which is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the source, and the self-sustainability of the communities. For these reasons, Ryan's Well Foundation focuses, not only on the construction of water projects, but also on the accompanying WASH training. We understand the impact having access to clean water and WASH education can have on vulnerable communities, not only for their health and well-being, but also for overall community development. When we provide access to a clean water source and WASH training, we are simultaneously influencing the social, environmental, and economic issues affecting at-risk populations. For example, with the provision of infrastructure, men and women can spend less time collecting water, and more time on income-generating activities to break the cycle of poverty. In addition, when children do not have to spend hours a day collecting water for their families, they can spend more time in school learning to read and write, or playing with others. So why water and WASH education? Because access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene has the power to positively transform communities and change everything.

Water and Health:

Ryan's Well Foundation was created based on the knowledge that people in developing countries were falling ill and dying because they lacked access to clean drinking water. Over one billion people in developing communities all over the world are fetching water from contaminated sources in order to survive. However, it is less known how a lack of access to this education can create barriers for these populations to prosper and reach their full potential. From a health perspective, these contaminated sources often carry water-borne diseases, such as typhoid and cholera, which can lead to life-threatening symptoms, such as diarrhoea. Diarrhoeal disease can lead to malnutrition, which is a continuing source of illness and death amongst children under the age of 5 in Sub-Saharan Africa. As well, a lack of proper WASH education leads to the spread of communicable diseases, such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. Additionally, some medical facilities treating patients with these illnesses lack access to a safe water source for medical purposes, which can then spread the diseases further throughout the health facility and surrounding community. However, by providing communities with a safe water source to collect from and utilize, rates of illness and death caused by contaminated water are lowered exponentially. Ryan's Well works to

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provide both water and WASH education, as the management and maintenance of the source means that communities will have access to clean water and sanitation for years to come.

Water and Education:

When students do not have a clean water source to drink from, or washroom to use, their education suffers. Water-related illnesses caused by contaminated water are one of the main contributors to lowered school attendance and enrolment in developing countries. Another major issue for students without access to safe water on school premises is the amount of time spent collecting water across long distances, typically 5km-15km. School children can spend hours a day collecting water for drinking and washing, which is time they are unable to spend learning to read and write, or playing with classmates. In addition, water is often collected multiple times a day, leading to education deficits, and increases the risk of poverty, poor health, and jeopardizes their well-being. Women and children are disproportionately affected by a lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and shoulder the largest burden in water collection worldwide. However, access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) education is a critical pathway to positively transforming communities, supporting both boys and girls in leading healthy lives and participating in social, economic, and political activities. Also, with the inclusion of menstrual hygiene and WASH education, school becomes a safe learning environment for everyone. Some of our partners include specific workshops for local health care professionals, teachers, students (boy and girls), and local women leaders to train them on how to make RUMPs (Reusable Menstruation Pads). This specific skill-building workshop will immediately result in an improved ability for women and adolescent girls to manage their menses because they will have a reusable pad made by the end of the workshop, as well as encompassing the knowledge to create their future menstruation materials. By including men and boys in these training workshops, we are contributing to breaking the negative stigma associated with menstruation. As a result, students are empowered to reach their full potential and become agents of change in their communities.

Water and Gender Equality:

The responsibility of gathering water disproportionately falls on women and children, especially girls. [Already said this] [this was already discussed above]. However, by providing communities with safe water sources and WASH training, women and men have equal opportunities. For this reason, Ryan's Well Foundation takes great pride in ensuring that our programs promote gender equity, and firmly believes that a gendered approach to WASH can positively impact the social, political, and economic position of women. [Already said this.] For example, access to safe water and reusable menstrual products on school premises means that girls can attend school more frequently, and do not need to miss days of class when they're on their menses. In addition, when women no longer have to collect water for their families, they can work more often and help provide financially for their household. We also aim to support the full participation of women in the implementation and sustainability of all of our WASH efforts, such as encouraging our WASH committees to have women in key

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leadership roles. This ensures that physical and cultural aspects [what kind of physical and cultural aspects? I'd be specific here], as well as gender inequalities, are addressed.

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